



Bulletin *on* Divine Worship

Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham



THIS ISSUE OF THE *Bulletin on Divine Worship* discusses the Advent ember days, and two features of the missal for use over the Christmas season: the Proclamation of the Birth of Christ and the Proclamation of Moveable Feasts. ❧

Divine Worship: Sunday Missal Good progress continues to be made with our colleagues at The Catholic Truth Society in preparing a second edition of the hand missal for the use of the laity on Sundays and major feasts. This was first issued in 2018. The second edition will be a substantially new edition, ensuring greater utility for those attending Mass according to *Divine Worship*. Changes include the addition of some of the appendices used alongside the Order of Mass (Prayers of Preparation and the Last Gospel amongst them), the familiar prayers of preparation and thanksgiving from the Anglican tradition, Stations of the Cross by St John Henry Newman, and other helpful texts for the year, including for Remembrance Sunday. A future issue of the *Bulletin* will provide updates on the expected date of publication. ❧

The Roman Mass: From Early Christian Origins to Tridentine Reform This important new book by Father Uwe Michael Lang of the London Oratory (published by Cambridge University Press) traces the development of the Roman Mass from the apostolic period up to the Council of Trent. The work is of particular interest to those in the ordinariates because it deals with many of the liturgical developments of the High and Later Middle Ages that, in turn, affected the preparation of the Book of Common Prayer. It also sheds light on how this period of liturgical history, far from being one simply of decline as it is sometimes portrayed, was in fact one of nuanced development. The book is currently only available in hardback, but a summary can be found [here](#). Father James Bradley [reviewed](#) the book in *The Catholic Herald* earlier this year. ❧

The Advent Ember Days In *Divine Worship*, the Advent ember days fall on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the First Sunday in Advent. They have the rank of (obligatory) Memorials. This year (2023) we observe them on Wednesday 6 December, and Saturday 9 December (St Nicholas and St Juan Diego are both *optional* memorials), but not on Friday 8 December, because the Immaculate Conception takes precedence.

In the office, the ember days each have their own Collect, and the Collect for the Advent Sunday follows (the collects of Sts Nicholas and Juan Diego might be added after the Third Collect). The office lectionary does not mention the ember days (we have *e.g.* “Wednesday after the First Sunday of Advent” rather than “Ember Wednesday”), and the readings themselves continue the pattern for the rest of that week: Isaiah and St Mark in the morning; Isaiah and Revelation in the Evening.

In the *Supplementary Texts*, however, these days are designated, *e.g.* “Ember Wednesday in Advent,” but there are no surprising extra texts: daily antiphons for the Benedictus and Magnificat; Invitatory, Hymn, and Versicle and Response are as appointed for Advent I. The Litany is encouraged on ember days.

In the missal, we have three proper Masses for each ember day. The first has a pronouncedly Marian character: the Introit is *Rorate, caeli*, which is used on Advent IV and 24 December, and in Masses of Our Lady from Advent to Christmas. The Offertory, *Hail Mary...*, and Communion, *Behold, a Virgin...* are also shared among all these Masses. Sarum and the preconciliar *Missale Romanum* share mostly the same provision for these days: the Introit and Communion are the same as *Divine Worship*, but the Offertory (*Confortamini*; Is. 35:4) is different. *Divine Worship*'s Collect, Prayer over the Offerings, and Postcommunion are also as in the tradition; the Gospel there is the Annunciation. Friday's Mass anticipates the coming of the Saviour, and our liberation. The Collect asks that we “may speedily be delivered from our adversities”; the Postcommunion asks that the Sacrament which we have received “may deliver us from the sins of our former nature.” Saturday's texts give us another meaning of salvation: the sense of healing. The “frailty of our mortal nature” can be “relieved by thy gracious visitation”; the holy mysteries, “given unto us for the assurance of our salvation” effect “the healing of our souls.” Saturday gives us a choice of four collects altogether: the first, which is the old proper one for this day; then the three “for those to be ordained”; “for the choice of fit persons for the ordained ministry”; or “for all Christians in their vocation.” Note that other days, such as the Second Sunday of Advent, offer a choice of collects, with the rubric that “the Collect chosen for use at the Office should be the same as that

used at the Mass.” The ember day offices do not include this, and the ordination/vocation collects given in the Missal do not appear in the office. Among the *Occasional Prayers* is one for ember days, a different one again from the three in the missal; this one would be said after the Third Collect. It would seem appropriate to use the first, seasonal collect, at Mass, unless there is a particular reason to use one of the others.

The traditional ember days frequently had several readings before the Gospel, making extensive use of the Old Testament. Where they had more readings, they also had more proper prayers, such that our Collect on the Wednesday is the first out of two collects, and on Saturday, the first out of six. *Divine Worship* provides the Roman Lectionary readings for the occurring Advent weekdays, which are the same each year. Were the old ember day readings more suitable to being specifically on ember days? Probably not. In both old and new lectionaries, we are hearing from Isaiah at considerable length. The old Gospels (Annunciation, Visitation, and Preaching of St John the Baptist) are perhaps more suitable as a weekday suite further on in Advent.

On which note: the ember days traditionally fell after St Lucy’s day, 13 December, which I think makes them always in the third week of Advent (the others are in the first week of Lent; the Octave of Pentecost; and the Wednesday following Holy Cross, on 14 September). St John XXIII’s reforms of the office had the perhaps unintentional effect of shifting the September ember days from this place in some, but not all, years. In the 1662 BCP, the dates of the ember days are likewise given as following Lent I, Pentecost, 14 September and 13 December. Oddly enough, the Church of England’s website has a note explaining that “[t]raditionally they have been observed on the Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays within the weeks before the Third Sunday of Advent, the Second Sunday of Lent and the Sundays nearest to 29 June and 29 September.” The first must surely mean “before the Fourth Sunday of Advent” (why before rather than the more traditional “after”?); the second is right; the third surely can’t work with a moveable Pentecost, and I am insufficiently adept at maths to work out the last one. If anyone can shed light on the origin of this assertion of “tradition,” I would be interested to know.

In any case, our *Divine Worship* Advent ember days are also “in the wrong place,” *i.e.* in the first week of Advent, rather than later on. The *warrant* for this is in the Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year: “In order that the Rogation Days and Ember Days may be adapted to the different regions and different needs of the faithful, the Conferences of Bishops should arrange the time and manner in which they are held.” The *reason* is almost certainly that *Divine Worship*, in line with the postconciliar *Roman Missal*, gives the days of Advent from 17-24 December a proper Mass for each day, and attempting to layer ember days on top of that would be either complicated or somehow undesirable (or both).

— Fr Daniel Lloyd ☩

The Proclamation of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ At the back of our missal are several appendices for use during the celebration of Mass, and for use at certain times of the liturgical year. Appendix 9 gives *The Proclamation of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. This is a text taken from the Roman Martyrology; a book that takes us through the liturgical year, not principally by indicating its feasts (like the liturgical calendar) but indicating actual calendar dates, and noting on each calendar day the anniversaries of the martyrs. Interestingly, the Roman Martyrology is the only liturgical book revised after the Second Vatican Council that has not yet been published in English, though a translation is being prepared.

The Proclamation was formerly chanted at the Office of Prime in the Roman Rite, but following the abolition of Prime by the Second Vatican Council it languished, somewhat unused (at least outside monasteries), until it was reintroduced into the Papal Mass for Christmas night in the pontificate of Pope John Paul II.

First, the text has a theological basis. The liturgical year is an unfolding of the mystery of Christ; the gradual revealing of the divine in the realm of the human. As Dom Odo Casel wrote, in liturgical feasts “the divine life is in some fashion actualized.” The infusion of human time with divine eternity means that liturgical celebrations are never simply happening ‘now,’ but also ‘then’ and also ‘in the time to come.’ Our recounting of events in time, and specifically within a liturgical setting, emphasizes this point and calls us from the mundane to elevate our hearts and minds to God,

and so to the glories of heaven. This is a theme introduced at the very start of the liturgical year in the Introit on Advent Sunday – *Ad te levavi* – and it is also found at its conclusion, in the feast of Christ the King. So the liturgical chanting of these dates represents far more than kind of a glorified liturgical *Filofax*; it is rather nothing less than the voice of the Church through the ages insisting that the ‘then’ of the Nativity is also the ‘now’ of our own time, and the hope of our salvation to come.

In fact, the earliest record of the birth of Christ on 25 December is to be found in a martyrology, or more properly in a ‘chronograph,’ from the year 345 A.D. It lists various dates of the ‘birth’ (by which it means, of course, death) of the early Christian martyrs, and the entry for 25 December begins with the phrase, *VIII Kal. Ianuarii natus Christus in Bethleem Iudae*, which is essentially an abbreviated form of what we are given to sing ourselves in the text in the missal.

Secondly, the Proclamation has something of a juridical character. We often lose a sense of this ‘legal’ (in the broad sense) dimension of the liturgy, but it’s there all the time. Think of baptism: the liturgical act, the sacramental washing, and the juridical ascription to the visible Church. Or even in the words of consecration at Mass: the liturgical text, the sacramental effect, and the juridical fact that what was bread is now something more.

The juridical dimension of the Proclamation is that it announces and definitively establishes the time at which we have arrived. It says, in more formal language: Advent is over and Christmas is here. For this reason the Proclamation is appointed by the missal to be chanted or recited at a specific actual time, related also to liturgical time: namely, at Evening Prayer on 24 December. In the office book it says, more specifically, that it is to be used *before* the start of the evening office, because that is in fact the first liturgical celebration that is properly *of Christmas*. If it is not used at Evening Prayer, perhaps because Evensong is not said in public, it might be sung *before* the Midnight Mass, noting again that this Mass is also *of Christmas*. As an aside and as Bishop Peter Elliott notes, where there is one, the crib should be blessed and the *bambino* enthroned in it *before* the Midnight Mass begins, not at its end. If this is to be done at the *end* of any Mass, it could be at the end of the Vigil Mass of Christmas. But once Christmas has begun (once *O Lord, open thou our lips* has been sung at

Evensong on Christmas Eve), everything should already be in place.

Given that *Divine Worship* retains the optional use of the Office of Prime, largely as found in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, the Proclamation may also be used at the appointed time at that office on Christmas morning. In that context, however, it is not so much stating a new reality in the sense we have just discussed, but rather announcing (in the manner of a martyrology) the events commemorated on that calendar day.

Thirdly and finally, in recalling the importance of time to the liturgical year in general we can see in the Proclamation of *Christmas* something of a parallel with the events of the holy night of *Easter*. At that great mother of all vigils, of course, we do not only name Christ as the “yesterday and today, the Beginning and the End, Alpha and Omega,” but go on to sit in the darkness of the church building to hear anew the narrative of our salvation, from the creation account in Genesis to the Resurrection itself.

In the holy night of *Christmas*, in which our minds are focussed on a different part of the same mystery of Christ, we hear a distant echo of those paschal celebrations as we recount the salvation narrative in the words of the Proclamation, and rejoice in the birth into time, into the world, and into our hearts, of the eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, the Lord Jesus Christ:

“...when ages beyond number had run their course from the creation of the world, when God in the beginning created heaven and earth, and formed man in own likeness; when century upon century had passed since the Almighty set his bow in the clouds after the Great Flood, as a sign of covenant and peace; in the twenty-first century since Abraham, our father in faith, came out of Ur of the Chaldees; in the thirteenth century since the People of Israel were led by Moses in the Exodus from Egypt; around the thousandth year since David was anointed King; in the sixty-fifth week of the prophecy of Daniel; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad, in the year seven hundred and fifty-two since the foundation of the City of Rome; in the forty-second year of the reign of Caesar Octavian Augustus, the whole world being at peace...”

— Fr James Bradley ❖

The Proclamation of the Date of Easter and of the Moveable Feasts on Epiphany

The interplay between the temporal and sanctoral calendars can easily confuse, and the various festivals do not always fall in the same place. We can navigate this fairly easily by reference to the annual ordo, or even by opening various apps with

built in calendars; in previous times these various means were not available and therefore alternative means were needed to ensure that the great celebrations of our redemption were observed.

At its centre is the date of Easter, as various other feasts are based on this date; this is possible to identify by observation (being based on the cycle of the moon), but clearly advance knowledge is needed for due preparation to be made (not least, keeping Lent). There is evidence from the fourth century of this calculation being made at Alexandria, a city renowned for its astronomers. Bishops began to circulate letters giving details of the date for Easter, and then of other dates associated with it, at Epiphany, in order to ensure that the whole Church was marking these moveable celebrations at the same time.

Given the way that the liturgy has evolved, it is unsurprising that this rather mundane means of publication eventually became part of the ritual at Mass on the Epiphany. In various places it was marked in slightly different ways; but the text of the proclamation has always been rather bare, merely noting the dates rather than giving details of the celebrations. This textual brevity should not be mistaken as implying a lack of solemnity. The Roman Rite practice tended to limit its proclamation to cathedrals and other major churches; in these, following the Gospel, the archdeacon or precentor would don a white cope and ascend the pulpit (which had been hung in white silk) in order to sing the text.

The text was not at first included in the Roman Missal after the Second Vatican Council; however with the Third Typical Edition it was provided in an appendix. This maintained the same chant as the earlier *Pontificale Romanum*, and made only minor changes to the text (dropping the reference to Septuagesima and changing the title of Corpus Christi). As the Third Typical Edition was provided in English translation, it became more widely available to the anglophone world. *Divine Worship: The Missal* includes the same translation in Appendix 10 (p. 1070). The inclusion of the text in the missal (rather than in the pontifical, as formerly was the case) suggests an encouragement to use this proclamation more widely than just in cathedrals; a suggestion which has been taken up in a number of our groups already.

While its origins are practical in nature, this does not preclude its having a spiritual value. A point

which has long been noted is the union of the festivities which it implies. As we have just spent the twelve days celebrating the infant Christ and his incarnation; a brief turn of the mind to his resurrection and ascension remind us of why he became man; and by referencing Corpus Christi we speak of his abiding presence in the Blessed Sacrament. Prosper Guéranger is but one writer to draw this unity out. He speaks of the proclamation “[showing] both the mysterious connection which unites the great solemnities of the year one with another, and the importance the faithful ought to attach to the celebration of that which is the greatest of all, and the centre of all religion.”

In the Roman Rite, this unity is given a further, musical expression in the chant itself. This is based on the chant of the *Exsultet*, and so in itself marks the unity of the proclamation at the Epiphany with Easter.

In terms of the practicalities of making the proclamation. The rubric in our missal notes that it should be proclaimed by “a Deacon or cantor” and “from the ambo.” It should be made following the Gospel, and therefore if a group has a Deacon, or a Priest fulfilling that function, he would be the most natural choice. As noted above, the chant was historically an integral part of the proclamation – reflecting both its solemnity and the link with Easter which it makes – and therefore a sung proclamation is preferable. The chant is not always instinctive, and practice beforehand is well-advised; there are a number of recordings available on streaming sites such as YouTube to assist. The text is neither diaconal nor sacerdotal in its nature, but the proclamation is more fittingly made by a cleric; however, the rubric does foresee the use of a lay cantor if needed.

The proclamation should be seen as distinct both from the Gospel and from any notices which might be made at that point before the homily. Where acolytes carry candles during the Gospel, these will depart before the proclamation begins. There is no definitive guide to the posture of the congregation; however, Bishop Peter Elliott suggests that they should remain standing, which would add to the solemnity of the proclamation. Having a white hanging on the ambo from which it is proclaimed would be fitting, and in line with the tradition.

If the proclamation is made by the Deacon of the Mass, he will already be in a dalmatic and remains so; if the Priest celebrating Mass (or a

concelebrating Priest) does so, he remains in the chasuble; if another cleric does so, it would be fitting to wear a cope; a lay cantor would normally wear cassock and surplice.

As the text itself is brief and self-explanatory it does not need an introduction; however, a brief note drawing out some of its meaning could make a useful addition to a newsletter. Publishing the text in the newsletter may also assist the faithful in remembering the dates for holydays of obligation and major liturgical feast in the coming year.

The proclamation reaches right back to the early history of the Church, and has a spiritual value – providing catechesis through the liturgy itself – and so should commend itself to our use.

— Fr Thomas Mason 🕯

Text of the Proclamation of the Date of Easter and of the Moveable Feasts on Epiphany in the Year of Our Lord 2023

Know, dear brethren, that, as we have rejoiced at the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so by leave of God's mercy we announce to you also the joy of his Resurrection, who is our Saviour. On the fourteenth day of February will fall Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of the fast of the most sacred Lenten season. On the thirty-first day of March you will celebrate with joy Easter Day, the Paschal feast of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the ninth day of May will be the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ. On the nineteenth day of May, the feast of Pentecost. On the second day of June, the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. On the first day of December, the first Sunday of the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. 🕯

Seasonal Blessings

Blessing of the Christmas Crib (Christmas Eve) Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, who as on this night didst cause thine only begotten Son to be born of the blessed and glorious ever virgin Mary for our salvation: vouchsafe, we beseech thee, so to ✠ hallow and ✠ bless this Crib, where in are shown forth wonders of that sacred birth; that all those who, beholding the same, shall ponder and adore the mystery of his holy Incarnation, may be filled with thy heavenly benediction unto life eternal. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen. 🕯

Blessing of Chalk (Epiphany) Bless, ✠ O Lord God, this creature chalk to render it helpful to men. Grant that they who use it in faith and with it inscribe upon the entrance of their homes the names of thy saints, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, may through their merits and intercession enjoy health of body and protection of soul. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. 🕯

Blessing of Throats (St Blaise, 3 February)

The candles to be blessed for this rite are distinct from those blessed for Candlemas. Two candles are prepared, held or bound together by way of ribbon or some device for this purpose. According to the custom of the place, either blessed and unlit candles are held at the neck of the one seeking the blessing, or blessed and lit candles are held before them. In either case, the minister holds the candles with his left hand, and makes the Sign of the Cross with his right.

Let us pray. Almighty and most merciful God, who hast created all things by the power of thy Word, and who, for the salvation of man, hast willed that that same Word, by whom all things were made should become incarnate; thou who art great and doest wondrous things, awesome and worthy of praise: for the confession of whose faith the glorious Martyr and Bishop Blaise, spurning divers torments, was counted worthy to receive the martyr's palm: to whom, among other gifts thou didst grant the virtue of healing infirmities of the throat through thine almighty power; we humbly beseech thy majesty that, regarding not our sins, thou wouldst deign to ✠ bless, through his prayers and merits, this creature of wax, sanctifying and hallowing it through thy grace: that all who with a lively faith receive its impress upon their throats, may be freed from all ailments of the same, and being restored to health, may show forth in thy holy Church their thankfulness for thy benefits, by praising thy glorious Name, which is worthy of eternal benediction. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The candles may be sprinkled with holy water. The Priest, wearing a red stole, holds the candles at the throat of those who desire the blessing, and says:

Through the intercession of blessed Blaise, may God free thee from all affections of the throat, and from all other ailments: in the Name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

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Proclamation of the Moveable Feasts - 2024

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now, dear brethren, that, as we have rejoiced at the Nativ- i- ty of Our

Lord Jesus Christ, so by leave of God's mercy we announce to you al-so the joy of

his Resurrection, who is our Sa- viour. On the fourteenth day of Febru- a- ry will

fall Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of the fast of the most sacred Lenten sea-

son. On the thirty-first day of March you will ce- lebrate with joy Easter Day, the

Paschal feast of our Lord Je- sus Christ. On the ninth day of May will be the A-

scension of Our Lord Je- sus Christ. On the nineteenth day of May, the feast of

Pen- tecost. On the second day of June, the feast of the Most Holy Body and

Blood of Christ. On the first day of December, the first Sunday of the Advent of

our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is honour and glory for ev-er and ev-er. Amen.